

STONEHAM HISTORICAL COMMISSION

October 6, 2014 - Meeting Minutes

Stoneham Public Library

Present: Joanne DiMambro, Alec J. Poitzsch, Margaret Warren, Marcia Wengen

Absent: Paul Foley, Joan Quigley, Stephen Rotondi, Robert Shannon

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m.

1. Quorum

- Margaret, as Chairperson, designated Alternate Member Alec to be 'Member' so that we would have a quorum for tonight's meeting.

2. Meeting Minutes

- The minutes of September 8 were approved.

3. Treasurer's Report

- In Joan's absence, Margaret reported \$215 in the operating account and \$1,176 in the donation account (Town Day donations of \$5 for the sale of one 200th anniversary fob and \$11 in the donation jar).

4. New Business

- a. Recording History ~ The ca. 1880 Leonard P. Benton House at 489 Main Street is scheduled to be converted from mixed-use to six apartment units. The architect has designed a sympathetic addition to the south and west facades and may be willing to save the tripartite bay window and retain/copy the 3/1 existing sashes. The owner will consider one of our historic markers.
- b. Sirius XM Radio ~ Zoning Board of Appeals received a request for a special permit to modify Sirius' existing wireless communications atop 7 Stonehill Drive. Marcia questioned why Sirius did not send us a Section 106 'Invitation to Comment' letter. Alec opined it could be because their service is satellite based. Marcia will post the question to the MassHistPres listserve. The ZBA did not rule on the request because no fee was paid.
- c. Warrant Article for Façade Improvement Program ~ Selectmen Boussy is proposing a warrant article for October Town Meeting to establish a façade improvement program for downtown buildings. Marcia requested additional language to be certain that the historic character of buildings over 50 years old would be retained. Two questions: is this for all buildings or just commercial ones and how is 'downtown' defined?
- d. Local Historic District ~ Marcia has had conversation twice with Chestnut Street resident Brenda Flynn about acknowledging the historical significance of Nobility Hill. One option is the creation of a LHD that governed by Mass General Law 40C that requires a study committee appointed by the Selectmen, creation of a study report that is submitted to the Mass Historical Commission and the local Planning Board, a public hearing, a warrant article being approved by a 2/3 majority vote at Town Meeting, Attorney General review, filing of a by-law with Town Clerk and recording same at the Registry of Deeds. Marcia will approach Ms. Flynn further about her interest. It may be that a historic marker would be a reasonable alternative to a LHD.
- e. Preservation Month Speaker ~ Joan was appointed to research a speaker for our May 14 joint meeting with the Historical Society.
- f. Historical Assets Team ~ nine local Historical Commissions have met twice to discuss the glaring lack of emphasis on 3,000+ historical buildings, cemeteries and objects in the North Suburban Planning Council's Priority Mapping Project report issued in January of 2014. Marcia presented a draft of historic preservation issues that might lend themselves to a regionalized approach, including building code education, an initiative to reduce teardowns, marketing of historic properties,

making preservation a priority. Alec is familiar with efforts in Cambridge and Somerville to promote preservation.

5. Old Business

- a) Website ~ nothing new to report.
- b) House Marker Program ~ nothing new to report on four pending markers.
- c) Burial Ground – no progress; yellow caution tape has been replaced; there is the possibility that the North Reading Minit and Militia Company would attend October 25 Open House to fire volleys honoring veterans buried in the OBG. A donation would be appreciated. Gunpowder is \$30.
- d) Tidd Gateposts ~ Jim Cotter, who is the great grandson of William Tidd, will contact his relatives about a dedication date, probably on a Saturday.
- e) Civil War Grant ~ no progress on Col. Gould's marker. Still need to decide the location.
- f) Weiss Farm ~ next Zoning Meeting is October 16 at 7:30 pm
- g) Open Meeting/Conflict of Interest ~ Paul needs to take the on-line conflict of interest tutorial; Alec completed his readings/tutorial and submitted paperwork to the Town Clerk.
- h) Naming of Streets ~ currently a new street name is presented by the developer to the DPW, who then seeks approval from the Fire and Police Departments. Marcia reported there is no interest from the Board of Selectmen to change this procedure. Chairman Boussy suggested giving a name list of veterans and civic ancestors to the Town Administrator.
- i) Fallon Farm ~ nothing new to report
- j) Demolition Delay ~ nothing new to report
- k) Items on Hold ~ 19 High Street, North School, 12 Tremont Street, Recording History at Weiss Farm

6. Open Forum

- a) Stoneham Town Center Vision and Action Plan ~ October 1 meeting with 80 stakeholders in attendance was hailed as a success. The format was four participatory exercises plus a short video rather than lecture/Q&A sessions. The tone was dynamic; participants reported it as being fun and very well organized. Final report is due in December.
- b) Fire Station Bay Clearance ~ Marcia reported being asked by a member of the Finance and Advisory Board about increasing the height of one or more bay entrances to accommodate a larger fire truck. She replied that the Commission would be opposed but, because of the Preservation Restriction, the Mass Historical Commission would have the final say.

The meeting ended at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia M. Wengen, Co-Chair & Secretary